

# REFLECTIONS

U P O N A

## Theological Distinction.

*According to which, 'tis said,*

That some A R T I C L E S of  
F A I T H are Above Reason,  
but not Against Reason.

---

*In a Letter to a Friend.*

---

*In the SAVOY:*

Printed by Edw. Jones, for John  
Taylor at the Ship in St. Paul's  
Church-yard. M D C X C.





---

## Advertisement.

**A**fter the Author had begun the Second Part of his Christian Virtuoso, and made some Progress in it, which he designed to continue till he had Completed it; he was obliged to leave the Country, where he enjoyed some Leisure, and to remove to London; where Sicknes, and Business, and a Multitude of Visits he could not avoid receivng, did so distract him, that these Remora's, added to the Fertility of the Subjects that remained to be Treated of, which he found much greater than he was at first aware of, made him lay aside the Materials he had prepared for the Second Part, to a fitter Opportunity, and comply with the Occa-  
A 2 sions



sions he had, to publish some Tracts that required more haste. And 'tis for the like Reasons, that having at present some other Essays of a quite differing Nature in the Press, he is obliged to postpone his resuming and finishing the Second Part of the Christian Virtuoso (which will require more Sheets than the former) for some longer time; tho yet to Comply with the Solicitations of the Printer, he consents both to let the First Part come abroad, and (to make the Book of a more decent size) add to it, by way of Substitution, a Discourse that is of Affinity enough to the other, upon the account of some of the Points it handles, and more upon that of its Scope; and that will not be Ill received, if it have the good fortune to find the Publick as kind to it, as Private Perusers have been.



---

*For my Learned Friend Mr. H. O.*

*S I R,*

I. **I** Can neither admire nor blame the Curiosity you express, to receive some Satisfaction about the important Distinction that is made use of, in defence of some Mysteries of the Christian Religion; namely, that *they are indeed above Reason, but not against Reason.* For though divers Learned Men have, especially of late, employed it; yet I perceive you and your Friends *N. N.* think, that they have not done it so clearly, as *both* to prevent the Exceptions of Infidels, or render them more groundless; *and* at least, to obviate the Surmises of those others, who have been persuaded to look upon this Distinction, but as a fine Evasion, whereby to elude some Objections that cannot otherwise be



answered. And indeed, as far as I can discern by the Authors wherein I have met with it, (for I pretend not to judge of any others,) there are *divers* that employ this Distinction, *few* that have attempted to explain it, (and that I fear, not sufficiently) and *none* that has taken care to justify it.

II. In order to the removal of the Difficulties that you take notice of, I shall endeavour to do these Two things: 1. To declare in what sense I think our Distinction is to be understood. And, 2. To prove that it is not an Arbitrary or Illusory Distinction, but grounded upon the Nature of Things.

Though I do not desire to impose my Sentiments on any Man, much less on You; yet because I, as well as others, have had some occasions to make use of the Distinction we are considering; I think myself obliged, before I go any further, to acquaint you in what sense I understand it.

III. By



III. By such things then in Theology, as may be said to be *above Reason*, I conceive such Notions and Propositions, as mere Reason, that is, Reason unassisted by supernatural Revelation, would never have discover'd to us: Whether those things be to our finite Capacities, clearly comprehensible or not. And by things *contrary to Reason*, I understand such Conceptions and Propositions, as are not only undiscoverable by mere Reason, but also, when we understand them, do evidently and truly appear to be repugnant to some Principle, or to some Conclusion, of Right Reason.

IV. To illustrate this Matter a little, I shall propound to you a Comparison drawn from that Sense, which is allow'd to have the greatest Cognation with the Understanding, which I presume you will readily guess to be the Sight. Suppose then, that on a deep Sea, a Diver should bid you tell him, What you can see there; That which you



would answer, would be, that you can see into a Sea-green Liquor, to the depth of some Yards, and no further: So that if he should farther ask you, Whether you see what lies at the Bottom of the Sea, you would return him a Negative Answer. If afterwards the Diver letting himself down to the Bottom, should thence bring up and shew you Oysters or Muscles with Pearls in them; you would easily acknowledge, both that they lay beyond the reach of your Sight, and consequently argued an Imperfection in it; tho' but such an Imperfection, as is not Personal but Common to you with other Men, and that the Pearls have the genuine Colour and Lustre, that naturally belongs to such Gems. But if this Diver should pretend, that each of these Pearls he shews you, is as large as a Tennis-Ball, or some of them bigger than the Shells they were inclos'd in, and that they are not round but cubical, and their colour not White or Orient, but Black  
or



or Scarlet; you would doubtless judge what he asserts, to be not only (or not so properly,) undiscernable by your Eyes, but contrary to the Informations of them, and therefore would deny what he affirms. Because, that to admit it, would not only argue your Sight to be Imperfect, but False and Delusory; tho' the Organ be rightly qualified, and duly applied to its proper Objects.

V. This Illustration may give you some superficial Notion of the Difference betwixt a thing's being *above Reason*, and its being *contrary to it*. But this may better appear, if we consider the Matter more distinctly. And to offer something in order to this, I shall beg leave to say, that, in my Opinion, the things that may be said to be *above Reason*, are not all of One sort, but may be distinguish'd into Two kinds, differing enough from each other.

VI. For it seems to me, that there are some Things, that Reason by its own Light cannot *Discover*; and others,



others, that, when propos'd, it cannot *Comprehend*.

VII. And First, there are divers Truths in the Christian Religion, that Reason left to itself, would never have been able to find out, nor perhaps to have so much as dream'd of: Such as are most of Those that depend upon the Free Will and Ordination of God, as, That the World was made in six Days, That Christ should be Born of a Virgin, and That in his Person there should be united Two such infinitely distant Natures as the Divine and Human; and That the Bodies of Good Men shall be rais'd from Death, and so advantageously chang'd, that the Glorified Persons shall be like, or equal to, the Angels.

VIII. Of this kind of Theological Truths, you will easily believe, that 'twere not difficult for me to offer divers other Instances; and indeed there are many Truths, and more I think than we are wont to imagine, that we want *Mediums*, or Instruments



ments to discover, thô, if they were duly propos'd, they would be intelligible to us: As, for my part, when by looking on the Starry Heaven, first with my naked Eyes, and then with Telescopes of differing Lengths, I did not only discry more and more Stars, according to the Goodness of the Instruments I imployed, but discover'd great Inducements to think, that there are in those inestimably remote Regions, many Celestial Lights, that only the Want of more reaching Telescopes conceal from our Sight.

IX. And thus much I presume you will close with the more easily, because it disagrees not with the Sentiments of some few (for I dare say not, many) Orthodox Divines. But I must take leave to add, that besides these mysterious Truths, that are too remote, and hidden, to be *Detected* by Human Reason; there is another sort of Things, that may be said to be *above Reason*.

X. For



X. For there are divers Truths delivered by Revelation, (contained in the Holy Scriptures,) that not only would never have been found out by mere natural Reason; but are so abstruse, that when they are proposed as clearly, as proper and unambiguous Expressions can propose them in; they do nevertheless surpass our dim and bounded Reason, on one or other of those Three accounts that are mentioned in a Dialogue *about things transcending Reason*; namely *either*, as not clearly *conceivable* by our Understanding, such as the Infiniteness and Perfections of the Divine Nature; *or inexplicable* by us, such as the Manner, how God can create a rational Soul; or how, this being an immaterial Substance, it can act upon a Human Body, and be acted on by it; (which Instance I rather chose, than the Creation of Matter, because it may be more easily proved) *or else asymmetrical*, or unsociable; that is, such, as we see not how to reconcile with  
other



other Things, which also manifestly are, or are by us acknowledged to be, true ; such as are the Divine Prescience of future Contingents, and the Liberty that belongs to Man's Will, at least in divers Cases.

XI. It will not perhaps be improper to observe, on this occasion, that, as of Things that are said to be above Reason, there are more kinds than one ; so there may be a Difference in the Degrees, or, at least, the Discernableness, of their Abstruseness.

XII. For *some things* appear to surpass, or distress, our Understandings, almost as soon as they are propos'd, at least, before they are attentively look'd into. As, what is said to be Infinite, either in Extent or Number. But there are *other things*, the Notions whereof, as they first arise from the things considered in gross, and as it were indefinitely, are such, as do not choque or perplex our Understandings ; and are so far intelligible, that they may be usefully employ'd in ordinary Discourse. But when we  
come



come to make a deep Inspection into these, and prosecute to the uttermost the successive Inferences that may be drawn from them ; we reason ourselves into Inextricable Difficulties, if not flat Repugnancies too. And to shew you, that I do not say this *gratis* ; be pleas'd to consider ~~with~~ me, that, we usually discourse of *Place*, of *Time*, and of *Motion* ; and have certain general indeterminate Conceptions, of each of these ; by the help of which, we understand one another, when we speak of them ; Thô, if we will look thorowly into them, and attentively consider all the Difficulties, that may be discover'd by such an Inspection ; we shall find our Reason oppress'd by the Number and Greatness of the Difficulties, into which we shall argue ourselves ; or, at least, may be argued by others ; thô these Men, who do make such shrewd Objections against the Hypothesis, we embrace, will hardly be able themselves to pitch on any, that will not allow us to  
 repay



repay them in the same coin.

XIII. What has been newly said, may, I hope, assist us to clear a Difficulty, or Scruple, (about the Distinction we treat of,) which since it sprung up in my own Mind, may very probably occur also to your Thoughts; namely, That if any Theological Proposition be granted to surpass our Reason; we cannot pretend to believe it, without discovering, that we do not sufficiently consider what we say: Since we pretend to exercise an act of the Understanding, in embracing somewhat that we do not understand, nor have a Notion of.

XIV. But on this occasion we may justly have recourse to a Distinction, like That I have lately intimated. For, in divers cases, the Notions, Men have of some Things, may be different enough, since the one is more obvious and superficial, and the other more Philosophical or accurate. And of these Two differing kinds of Conceptions, I have already offer'd  
some



some Instances in the very differing Notions, Men have of Place and Time: Which, tho' familiar Objects, I elsewhere shew to be each of them of so abstruse a Nature, that I do not wonder to find *Aristotle* himself complaining of the Difficulty that there is to give a clear, and unexceptionable, Notion of *Place*; nor to find so acute a Wit as *St. Austin*, ingenuously confessing his Disability to explicate the Nature of *Time*.

XV. And what is said of the great Intricacies, that incumber a deep Scrutiny into these familiar Objects of Discourse, will hold, as to the Divisibility of Quantity; as to Local Motion; and as to some other Primary things; whose Abstruseness is not inferior in Degree, tho' differing as to the Kinds of things, wherein it consists.

XVI. By such Instances as these, it may appear, that without talking as Parrots, (as your Friends would intimate, that those that use our Distinctions must do;) or as irrational Men,



Men ; we may speak of some Things that we acknowledge to be on some account or other above our Reason; since the Notions we may have of those Things, however dim and imperfect, may yet be of use, and may be in some measure intelligible, tho' the Things they relate to, may, in another respect, be said to transcend our Understanding; because an attentive Considerer may perceive, that something belongs to them, that is not clearly comprehensible, or does otherwise surpass our Reason (at least in our present State.)

XVII. Having dispatch'd the Objection, that requir'd this Digression: I shall now step again into the Way, and proceed in it by telling you, that any *one* apposite Instance may suffice to clear the former part of the Expression that is imploy'd, when 'tis said that a Mystery, or other Article of Faith, is *above* Reason, but not *contrary* to it: For if there be so much as *one* Truth, which is acknowledg'd to be such, and yet

B

not



not to be clearly and distinctly comprehensible, it cannot justly be pretended, that to make use of the Distinction we are treating of, is to say something, that is not intelligible, or is absurd. And it will further justify the Expression quarrelled at, if we can make it appear, that it is neither Impertinent or Arbitrary, but grounded on the Nature of Things. And this I shall endeavour to do, by shewing, that though I admit Two sorts of Things, which may be said to be *above* Reason, yet there is no necessity, that either of them must (always) be *contrary to* Reason.

XVIII. As for the first sort of Things said to surpass Reason, I see not, but that Men may *be unable*, without the Assistance of a more knowing Instructor, to discover some Truths ; and yet *be able*, when These are revealed or discovered to them by that Instructor, both to understand the disclosed Propositions by their own Rational Faculty, and approve them for True, and fit to be embraced.



ced. The Intellect of Man being such a bounded Faculty as it is, and naturally furnished with no greater a stock or share of Knowledge, than it is able by its own Endeavours to give itself, or acquire; 'twould be a great Unhappiness to Mankind, if we were obliged to reject, as repugnant to Reason, whatever we cannot discover by our own natural Light; and consequently, to deny our selves the great Benefits we may receive from the Communications of any higher and more discerning Intellect. An Instance to my present purpose may be found among Rational Souls themselves, though universally granted to be all of the same Nature. For, tho' a Person but superficially acquainted (for Example) with Geometry, would never have discovered by his own Light, that *the Diameter of a Square is incommensurable to the Side*; yet when a skilful Mathematician dextrously declares, and by a Series of Demonstrations proves, that noble Theorem; the Disciple by his now



instructed Reason will be able, both to understand it, and to assent to it: Insomuch, that *Plato* said, that *he was rather a Beast than a Man that would deny it.*

XIX. Other Instances may be alledged to exemplify the Truth newly mentioned. And indeed, there is not so much as a strong Presumption, that a Proposition or Notion is therefore repugnant to Reason, because it is not discoverable by It; since it is altogether extrinsecal and accidental to the Truth or Falsity of a Proposition, that we never heard of It before; or that we could never have found It out by our own Endeavours; but must have had the Knowledge of It imparted to us by another. But then this Disability to find out a thing by our own *Search*, doth not hinder us from being able by our own *Reason*, both to understand it when duly proposed, and to discern it to be agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason. To induce you to assent to the later part of this Observation, I shall add,  
that



that these Intellectual Assistances may oftentimes not only *enlighten*, but *gratify*, the Mind, by giving it such Informations, as both *agree with* its former maimed or imperfect Notices, and *compleat* them. When, for example, an antique Medal, half consumed with Rust, is shewed to an unskilful Person, though a Scholar; he will not by his own Endeavours be able to read the whole Inscription, whereof we suppose some parts to be obliterated by Time or Rust; or to discover the Meaning of it. But when a knowing Medalist becomes his Instructor, he may then know some (much defaced) Letters, that were illegible to him before, and both understand the Sense of the Inscription, and approve it as genuine and suitable to the Things, whereto it ought to be congruous. And because divers Philosophical Wits are apt, as well as you, to be startled at the name of *Mystery*, and suspect, that because it implies something abstruse, there lyes hid some Illusion



under that obscure Term: I shall venture to add, that agreeably to our Doctrine we may observe, that divers things that relate to the Old Testament, are in the New called Mysteries, because they were *so* under the Mosaick Dispensation; tho they cease to be *so*, now that the Apostles have explained them to the World. As the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God, is by

their Apostle called a  
*Coloss. I. 26.* *Mystery*; because, to use  
*Eph. III. 3, 5, 6.* his Phrase, it *had been hid*  
*from Ages and Generations*:

Though he adds, *But now 'tis made manifest to his Saints.* And the same Writer tells the *Corinthians*, that he *shows them a Mystery*,

*1 Corinth. XV.* which he immediately  
*c. 51, 52.* explains, by foretelling, that *all pious Believers*

shall not dye, because that *those that shall be found alive at the coming of Christ, shall not sleep, but be changed; as the other Dead shall be raised incorruptible.* Which surprising Doctrine,



ctrine, though because it could not be discovered by the Light of Nature, nor of the Writings of the *Old Testament*, he calls a Mystery; yet it is no more so to us, now that he hath so expressly foretold it, and therefore declared it.

XX. Other Instances I content myself to point at in the Margin, that I may pass on to confirm the Observation

See Mat. XIII.

II.

I formerly intimated; *Ephes. V. 31.*

that divers things which the Scripture teaches beyond what was known, or (in probability) are discoverable by natural Light, are so far from being *against Reason*, by being (in the sense declared) *above it*; that these Discoveries ought much to recommend the Scripture to a rational Mind; because they do not only Agree with the doubtful or imperfect Notions we already had of things, but Improve them, if not Compleat them. Nay, I shall venture to add, that these Intellectual Aids may not seldom help us to discern, That some



Things, which not only *are* above Reason, but at first sight *seem to be* against it ; are really reconcileable to Reason, improved by the new Helps, afforded it by Revelation. To illustrate this by a Philosophical Instance, when *Gallileo* first made his Discoveries with the Telescope, and said, That there were Planets that moved about *Jupiter* ; He said something , that other Astronomers could not discern to be True, but nothing that they could prove to be False. And even when some Revelations are thought not only to *transcend Reason*, but to *clash with it* ; it is to be considered, Whether such Doctrins are really repugnant to any absolute Catholick Rule of Reason, or only to something, which so far depends upon the Measure of acquired Information we then enjoy, that, though we judge it to be Irrational, yet we are not sure, that the Thing, this Judgment is grounded on, is clearly and fully enough known to us. As, to resume the former Example, when *Gallileo*,

or



or some of his Disciples, affirmed *Venus* to be sometimes Horned like the Moon; tho' this Assertion were repugnant to the unanimous Doctrine of Astronomers, who thought their Opinion very well grounded, on no less a Testimony than That of their own Eyes; yet in effect the Proof was incompetent, because their unassisted Eyes could not afford them sufficient Information about this case. And so, when *Gallileo* spoke of Hills and Valleys, and Shadows, in the Moon, they were not straight to reject what he taught, but to have, if not a kind of implicit Faith, yet a great Disposition to believe what he delivered, as upon his own Knowledge, about the Figure and Number of the Planets. For they knew, that he had, and had already successfully made use of, a Way of discovering Cœlestial Objects, that they were not Masters of; nor therefore competent Judges of all the Things, though they might well be of many, that he affirmed to be discoverable by it. And  
 though



though they could not see in the Moon what he observed, (Valleys, Mountains, and the Shadows of these) yet they might justly suspect, that the Difference of the *Idea* that they framed of that Planet, and that which he proposed, might well proceed from the Imperfection of their unaided Sight; especially considering, that what he said, of the differing Constitution of what is there analogous to Sea and Land, did rather Correct and Improve, than absolutely Overthrow, their former Notices. For he allowed the Spots they saw, to be darker Parts of the Moon, and gave Causes of that Darkness; which their bare Eyes could not have led them to any such Knowledge of. And the Non-appearance of the Mountainous Parts of the Moon in that form to the naked Eye, might well be imputed to the great Distance betwixt them and us, since at a far less Distance square Towers appear round, &c.



XXI. It now remains, that I say something, that may both make some Application of the Form of Speech hitherto discoursed of, and afford a Confirmation of the Grounds whereon, I think, it may be justified. This I am the rather induced to do, because I expect it will be objected, that he that acknowledges, that the Thing he would have us believe, transcends our Reason, has a Mind to deceive us, and procures for himself a fair opportunity to delude us, by employing an Arbitrary Distinction, which he may apply as he pleases.

XXII. But to speak first a word or two to this last Clause; I acknowledge, that such a Distinction is capable enough of being misapplied: And I am apt to think, that, by some School-Divines, and others, it has been so. But, since there are other Distinctions that are generally and justly received by Learned Men, and even by Philosophers themselves, without having any Immunity from being capable to be perverted; I  
know



know not, why the Distinction, we are considering, should not be treated as favourably as they. And however, the Question at present is not, *whether* our Distinction may possibly be misapplied by rash or imposing Men; but *whether* it be grounded on the Nature of Things. To come then to the Thing it self, I consider, that for an Opinion to be *above Reason*, in the sense formerly assigned, is somewhat, that (as was noted in reference to the first sort of Things, that surpass it) is Extrinsecal and Accidental to its being True or False. For to be *above our Reason*, is not an Absolute thing, but a Respective one, importing a Relation to the Measure of Knowledge, that belongs to the Human Understanding, such as 'tis said to transcend: And therefore it may not be *above Reason*, in reference to a more enlightned Intellect; such as *in probability* may be found in Rational Beings of an higher Order, such as are the Angels; and, without peradventure, is to be found in God: Whom,



Whom, when we conceive to be a Being Infinitely perfect, we must ascribe to him a perfect Understanding, and boundless Knowledge. This being supposed, it ought not to be denied, that a Superior Intellect may both comprehend several Things that we cannot; and discern such of them to be congruous to the fixt and eternal *Idea's* of Truth, and consequently agreeable to one another, as dim-sighted Mortals are apt to suspect, or to think, to be separately False; or, when collated, Inconsistent with one another. But to lanch into this Speculation, would lead me farther than I have time to go. And therefore I shall content my self to offer you one Argument, to prove, That of Things that may be said to be *above Reason*, in the Sense formerly explained, it is no way impossible, that even such an one should be true, as is obnoxious to Objections not directly answerable. For I consider, that of Things *above Reason*, there may be some which are really *contradictory* to one  
ano-



another, and yet each of them is maintainable by such Arguments, as very Learned and Subtle Men do both Acquiesce in, and Enforce, by loading the Embracers of the opposite Opinion, with Objections they cannot directly answer.

**XXIII.** This I take to be manifest, in the case of the Controversy about the endless Divisibility of *Quantity*; as, suppose, of a straight Line. For many eminent Mathematicians, and a greater number of Naturalists, and in particular almost all the Epicureans, and other Atomists, stily maintain the Negative. The Affirmative is nevertheless asserted, and thought to be Mathematically demonstrated, by *Aristotle* in a peculiar Tract; and both by His School, and by several excellent Geometricians besides. And yet in reality, the Assertions of these Two contending Parties are truly Contradictory; since, of necessity a straight Line proposed must be, at least mentally, divisible, into Parts that are them-



themselves still further divisible ; or, it must not be so, and the Subdivisions must at length come to a stop. And therefore one of the opposite Opinions must be true. And 'tis plain to those, that have, with competent Skill and Attention, impartially examined this Controversy, that the side that is pitched upon, whichsoever it be, is liable to be exposed to such Difficulties, and other Objections, as are not clearly answerable; but confound and oppress the Reason of those that strive to defend it.

XXIV. I have, Sir, the more largely discoursed of the foregoing Distinction ; not only, because I did not find my self to have been prevented by others ; but, because I look upon the explaining and justifying of it to be of Importance, not alone to the Defence of some Mysteries of the Christian Religion, but (what perhaps may have escaped your Observation) of some important Articles of Natural Theology it self. For though Natural Religion taught divers



vers Heathen Philosophers, such Truths as these, *viz.* The Production of the Rational Soul or Mind, which is an Immaterial Substance; the Formation of the World out of the Universal Matter, though this Action required, that an Incorporeal Substance gave Motion to a Body; *that* God knows Men's Thoughts and Intentions, how carefully soever they strive to hide them; and *that* God foreknows the Events of the free Actions of such Men, as are not to be born these many Ages; though, I say, these, and some other Sublime, Truths, were by divers Men embraced before the Gospel began to be Preached; yet when I attentively consider, how hard it is to conceive the *Modus* of these Things, and explain how some of them can be performed; and also, how some of the Divine Attributes, as Eternity, Immensity, Omnipresence, and some others, belong to God; and how some Actions, as the Moving of Bodies, and the Creation of Human

Minds,



Minds, with all their Noble Faculties, are Exercis'd by Him: When I consider such Things, I say, I acknowledge, that, to my apprehension, there are some Doctrines allowed to have been discovered by the mere Light of Nature, that are liable to such Objections from Physical Principles, and the settled order of Things corporeal; as, if they be urged home, will bring those that are Ingenuous to acknowledge, that their Intellects are but dim and imperfect, and indeed disproportionate to the sublimest and most mysterious Truths; and that they cannot perfectly comprehend them, and answer all the Difficulties that incumber them; though they find themselves obliged to admit them, because of the weighty Positive Reasons, that recommend those Heteroclite Truths to their Assent.

XXV. If you should now tell me, that, after all I have said, 'tis plain, that the question'd Distinction, if it were granted, might be of very  
 C bad



bad consequence ; as affording shelter to any Unintelligible Stuff, that some bold Enthusiast, or conceited Philosophizer, may obtrude under the Venerable Title of a *Mystery*, above the Jurisdiction of Reason ; and, that though the Distinction were admitted, it would not be a good Proof of any disputed Article of the Christian Religion : If, I say, this shall be objected, I shall answer, (what in part is intimated already) That I do not deny, but that our Distinction is liable to be ill employed, but that this is no other Blemish than what is common with it to divers other Distinctions, that are without scruple Admitted, because they are useful ; and not Rejected, because they have not the Privilege, that they can never be misapplied : And therefore, both in reference to those Distinctions, and to That we have been Treating of, it becomes Men to stand upon their Guard, and strictly examine, how far the Notion, or Doctrine, proposed as a *Mystery*,  
does



does require, and is entituled to, the benefit of this Distinction. I shall also readily grant the greatest part of the second Member of your Objection. For I think it were great Weakness in a Christian, to urge our Distinction as a positive Proof: Since, tho' it be Extrinsecal to an abstruse Notion, to be, or not to be, *above Reason*; (as was just now noted to another purpose,) yet, generally speaking, that Abstruseness is less fit to bring credit to a Conception, or a Doctrine, than 'tis to make it to be distrusted. Nor are Christians such fond Discourfers, as to pretend, That such an Article of Religion ought to be believed, Because 'tis *above Reason*, as if that were a proof of its Truth; but only, that if it be otherwise well proved, it ought to be believed, Notwithstanding its being *above Reason*.

XXVI. And this I shall represent in favour of those that believe these abstruse Articles, that are clear-

C 2

ly



ly revealed in the Scripture, upon the Authority of the Divine Revealer; (who never deceives Others, nor can be Himself deceived,) that *since*, as we have lately shewn by the contradictory Opinions about the Divisibility of Quantity, some Doctrines must be true, whose Difficulties do not appear to be surmountable by our dim Reason; and *since* the Perfectness of God's Knowledge permits us not to doubt, but that He certainly knows which of the two Contending Opinions is the True; and can declare so much to Men: It would not be a sure ground of rejecting a Revealed Article, to alledge, that 'tis encumber'd with confounding Difficulties, and lyable to many and weighty Objections.

XXVII. And, (to add somewhat that may help to defend some Truths of Natural, and others of Revealed, Religion) That a thing may be rationally assented to, upon  
clear



clear positive Evidence, though we cannot directly answer the Objections, that a Speculative and Subtle Wit may devise against it; is a Truth, which, as important as it is to Religion in general, and the Christian Religion in particular, I think one may sufficiently manifest by this one Instance, That, because we can walk up and down, and so remove our Bodies from Place to Place, by this one Argument, I say, we are justly satisfied, that there is Local Motion in the World, notwithstanding all the Specious and Subtle Arguments, that *Zeno* and his Followers have employed to impugn that Truth: Against which, they have alleged such Difficulties, as have not only puzzled and perplexed, but (for ought yet appears) *nonplus'd* the Antient Philosophers, and, I doubt, those Moderns too, that have attempted to give clear Solutions of them.



XXVIII. If now, Sir, we look back upon what hath hitherto been discoursed, I hope you will allow me to gather thence the Conclusion I aim at, which is, that There is no necessity, that every Notion or Proposition that may be found deliver'd in the Holy Scriptures, that surpasses *our Reason*, must therefore be *contradictory to it*: And that, in case the Christian Religion be True, and it's Mysteries or other Articles divinely Revealed; 'tis not enough, for the Confutation of any of them, to reject the Expression, *that 'tis above Reason, but not contrary to it*; as if it involved an unintelligible or groundless Distinction: For tho' This will not evince the Truth of a Mystery, since That must be Establish'd upon its proper Grounds and Arguments; yet it will keep it from being Therefore Absurd or False, because it transcends our Reason: Since to do so, may belong almost indifferently to a Chymical Notion, and a Myste-  
rious Truth,



( 35 )

Truth. And if the Expression be employed to justify any thing, that, tho' styl'd a Mystery, is but a pretended One ; the Error will lye, not in the Groundlesness of the Distinction, but the Erroneousness of the Application. I am,

S I R,

*Your most &c.*

---

**F I N I S.**

---